

LETTER XXVII

UBMI, *Oct.*
14.

VERY few European travellers visit Urmi and its magnificent plain, the "Paradise of Persia," though it is only 112 miles from Tabriz. Gardens come up to the city walls, and the plain, about fifty miles long by eighteen broad, is cultivated throughout, richly wooded, very populous, and bounded on the east not by a desert with its aridity, but by the blue waters of the Urmi Sea, and on the west by the magnificent mountains of Kurdistan. The city is some miles to the west of the lake.

Urmi is on the whole very pretty and in good repair. The Christian quarter is almost handsome, well built and substantial, and the houses are generally faced with red bricks. The bazars are large and well supplied, and trade is active. The walls and gateways are in good repair, and so is the deep ditch, which can be filled with water, which surrounds them. Every gate is approached by an avenue of noble *elcegnus* and other fruit trees. The gardens within the walls are very fine, and orchards and vineyards, planes and poplars testify to the abundance of water and the excellent method of its distribution. The altitude is stated at 4400 feet. The estimate of the population varies from 12,000 to 20,000.

Though the Sea of Urmi receives fourteen

rivers, some
of them by no means insignificant, and has
no known
outlet, it recedes rather steadily, leaving
bare a soil of